



**PRESS RELEASE: July 2010**

**‘Community benefits’ funding awarded to local groups by ACRE**

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), and members of the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN), have announced grant awards to 57 local community organisations, totalling £437,500 under this year’s COMMA fund.

COMMA, the Community Aggregates Fund, aims to compensate communities affected by quarrying, by supporting community-based projects in their area.

A record 287 applications were submitted this year. The 57 successful projects, all undertaken by local people themselves, received grants of between £3,000 and £20,000. They will provide a diverse range of local benefit to the relevant communities, including a local food initiative, installation of solar panels in a community building, playing fields improvements, elderly/disabled access and the construction of a composting toilet! A full list of project awards is available on the ACRE website.

Since 2007, ACRE has delivered this annual grants programme funded by Defra’s Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF). COMMA has attracted over 900 applications and has awarded funding to a value of £1,788,050 to 190 projects which address a wide range of needs in communities affected by aggregates extraction or transportation. This is the final round of the current programme.

The money makes a real difference at local level. The fund has been valued by local community groups who have contributed their own

financial resources, time and voluntary effort, alongside the grants, in order to make these projects a success. In Surrey, Farnham Local Food Initiative received £5,752, Godstone at Play received £6,000 and Thorpe Youth Association £5,000. All these projects went through a rigorous process before being put forward along with 3 other projects that were not funded. In Surrey a record 17 applications were received.

Sylvia Brown, Chief Executive of ACRE, said: 'ACRE is delighted to have been able to support such a diverse and exciting range of community initiatives through delivery of the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund. It clearly demonstrates how relatively small amounts of investment can harness local effort and fundraising to produce genuine and lasting benefit for communities. It also shows how, given an appropriate impetus, England's rural communities can and do respond positively to the Big Society principles of self reliance and community action'.

For more information, please contact Ryan Adams, Public Affairs Officer for ACRE on 01285 653477

Surrey Community Action is a registered charity which works to strengthen and support the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) across Surrey through access to advice, training, funding and advocacy. Surrey Community Action actively encourages volunteering and the details of local volunteer centres in Surrey can be found on our website at: [www.surreyca.org.uk/vb.htm](http://www.surreyca.org.uk/vb.htm)